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# Dream Yards

CLAIRE HIND & GARY WINTERS

## You are awake

A dream is invariably an attempt to get rid of a disturbance of sleep by means of a wish-fulfillment, so that the dream is a guardian of sleep.

Sigmund Freud (1940/1953)

*Cordelia (to the Doctor):* How does the King?

*Doctor:* Madam, sleeps still.

*Cordelia:* O you kind gods,  
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!  
The unturned and jarring senses, O, wind up  
Of this child-changed. Father!

*Doctor:* So please your majesty

That we may wake the King?

He hath slept long.

William Shakespeare (*King Lear*: Act 4, Scene 7)

There is much in neuropsychanalysis that is old, much that is borrowed, but also some perspectives that are new. Perhaps foremost, it seeks to understand the human mind from a cross-species evolutionary perspective, hopefully illuminating the affective roots of human nature more than traditional approaches have so far achieved.

Panksepp and Solms (2012:2)

## The Landscape

Let's map out a world. Gorillas and cats sleep for up to eighteen hours a day. Hybrid characters are the stuff of dreams. We love Paul Schofield's performance in Peter Brook's 1971 film of *King Lear* and the actor who plays his endearing Fool. King Kong is the stuff of dreams. Desires and dreams are worth living for. Freud's legacy is something to play out because it has been 'bashed about' over the years. Hybrid characters are the stuff of dreams – King Kong meets King Lear – HA! Dream recall acknowledges sleep's creative experience. Let's return to the 'old skool' but look to modern science to question Freudian theory.

Let's start to sleep, reader; let's enter Sleep Stage 1.

Freud theorized the need to dream was to protect sleep proper, precisely for health reasons, though he couldn't prove it scientifically. In 2012 and 2013 we spent time working with

Professor Mark Solms, a world-leading expert in sleep science and neuropsychanalysis who states that 'the brain isn't a muscle like other organs in the body; it has feelings and subjective experience. Neuropsychanalysis is where the brain meets the mind' (Solms 2015). We conducted two interviews with Solms, the first on a dark and blustery autumn night in 2012 at the Ritz Hotel, London, and the second on a crisp and sunny wintery afternoon in 2013 at the Neuropsychanalysis Association, London (NPSA). In these meetings Solms talked to us about the importance of dreaming in relation to sleeping proper. From our conversations and the advice given to us by Solms, we conducted a research and development phase for a new performance work entitled *Dream Yards*. The manifestations of

*Dream Yards* have been an itinerant dream collection point popping up in public spaces around the city: a theatre, a cafe, a Christmas market, a community centre, a cinema; as a space to engender conversation around individuals' sleep and their dreams. And then as a weekly late-night city walking tour that

1: Geographically used the network and routes of hidden passageways and short cuts around York, called Snickelways.

2: Conceptually structured as a journey into sleep, through its various stages, much like these pages.

3: Fictively inhabiting the relationship between King Lear and his Fool – we looked closer at this relationship, albeit refashioned and with a Fool who sometimes disguises himself as a cat and as the one who counsels and guides, helping our hybrid Kong Lear character to sleep and eventually to dream; and

4: Materially surfacing the images

and information of over 300 dreams accounts from the city's residents. We later developed this walking tour into a studio touring performance of the same name – HA!

There are many references to sleep in Shakespeare's plays; themes tend to be situated around the profound need to sleep, or the mystery of sleep itself and the relationship between sleep and death. King Lear's doctor prescribes sleep as a cure for madness. 'No, they cannot touch me for crying' (Shakespeare 1992: Act 4, Scene 6, 80); even Lear eventually understands that sleep has curative benefits as he awakens from a profound sleep.



We are now in the first few moments of sleep onset, reader, and we are dreaming, and if I were to wake you now, you would tell me you were dreaming of these pages as something familiar, in a familiar journal.

### Sleep Stage 2

At the Ritz Hotel, London, Solms informed us that as soon as a dreamer awakes she begins to move and that movement can make the memory of a dream fade or disappear.

Solms' rules for proper dream recall are as follows: 'When you wake allow for no interruptions so, don't set your alarm. As soon as you wake don't move, lie completely still. Remember what you can of your dream and think of words that describe it then, give it a name' (Solms 2012).



I am an 80-year-old woman and I'm walking in a forest shouting 'Help! Where am I?' This is my forest dream. I am a 56-year-old woman watching a tower from York Cathedral rise into the air, float and then fall back towards the city. This is my floating tower dream. I am a 41-year-old woman seeing tornadoes. This is my reoccurring dream. I am a 19-year-old woman sitting on the garden wall watching the neighbourhood. This is my neighbourhood dream. I'm a 7-year-old girl dreaming of a giant gorilla knocking on the door and picking me up; I scream but nobody in the dream hears. This is my reoccurring Gorilla dream. Our body temperature is dropping and our heart rate slows down. Can you feel it? (*Dream Yards* walking tour 2013; donations from the public.)

### Sleep Stage 3

Walking into Solms' office at the NPSA, we are warmly welcomed and shown a life-sized model of a human brain. Solms works through the parts of the brain that generate the dream process and

he explains that there is specific system in the brain that needs to be activated for you to have dreams; so, dreams are not a general arousal activation state – they are a very specific form of arousal state, they are a motivational state.

It's not just switching on the lights, it's switching on the lights plus motivational interest in what's going on, an interactive kind of curiosity, an expectancy, an interest. That's what drives the dream process and the neurotransmitter for that process is dopamine. (Solms 2013)

Solms advised us that it would not be productive for us to analyze dreams as if we were psychoanalysts but he was excited that we

wanted to use dreams as material in performance. He acknowledged the fact that we are sentient beings and we do feel dreams and therefore giving space for people to talk about their dreams was important. He informed us that Freud's early work has many flaws but his work on sleep is still very useful, especially the theory that dreams are motivated phenomena that draw us into sleep. 'Sleep is one of the natural goods of life, beautiful in itself, like flowers, like the songs of birds. It is the touchstone of health' (Pyre 1916:55). We wanted to see if performance work about sleep and dreams could in fact encourage sleep, we wanted to talk of dreams, invite people to share dream experiences – whether they remember their dreams or not – and to work through the stages of sleep in performance as a way to connect dreaming to the health benefits of sleep.

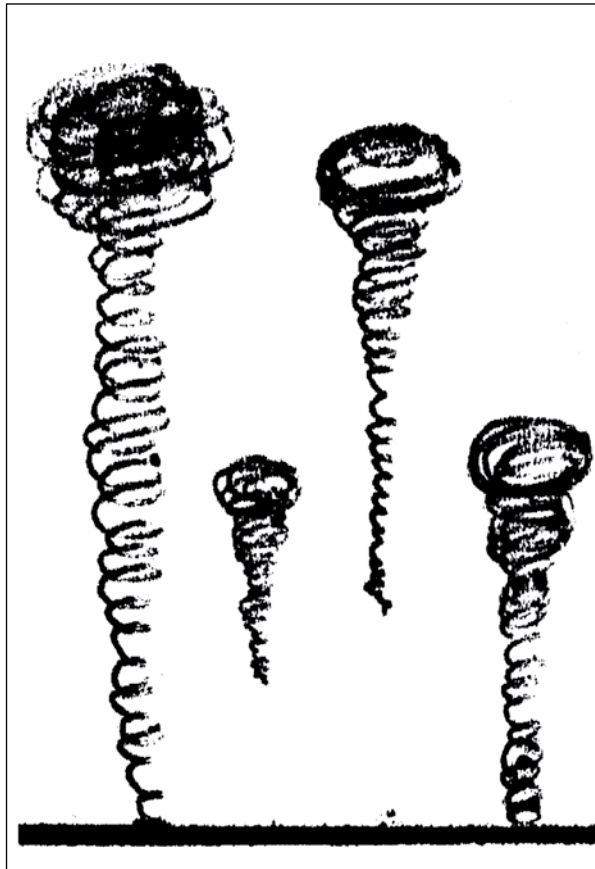
You are now in the transitional period between light sleep and very deep sleep, and your brain waves

are very slowing down, very, very slowing down.

### Back to Sleep Stage 2

Here in Precentor's Court, hidden from the day, hidden from the city, hidden from the office, the shop, the school and the café, I can help you sleep, I will be the one who sings before sleep as theta waves take over, so whether you are rodent, rabbit, dog, cat, bat or marsupial all together follow me and I'll go to bed at noon. (*Dream Yards* walking tour 2013; text read by The Fool)

You are now back in a light sleep.



## REM

The sleep science community has more recently combined non-REM stages 3 and 4 into one stage: stage 3. There are many variants in sleep cycles, according to what you read; this paper follows the suggested sleep cycle of an elderly man: Awake, 1, 2, 3, 2, REM, 2, 3, 2, REM, 2, REM, 2, REM, late morning.

We are all now experiencing bursts of rapid eye movement, we are paralyzed from the neck down and we are highly aroused; remember what you read, remember your lines.

### Again at Sleep Stage 2

*Kong Lear:* Are you in my dream, Fool?

*Fool:* Is that why you see me, but sometimes pass me by? If I was to wake you now, you may not know to tell me you were dreaming.

*Kong Lear:* How would I know to tell you this is a dream?

*Fool:* We would need a sign – one without lights or a fancy music system (*gestures to the sign he is holding*) – something coherent, and articulate, something a cat would do.

*Kong Lear:* Away from all this – what should it be?

*Fool:* Give me a moment to think. (*The Fool walks away and disappears from view.*)

(*Dream Yards walking tour 2013*)

In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, 'no explanation is given for the Fool's disappearance, a matter which some have found troubling' (Shakespeare 1997:56), to the point that many directors have reimagined (for the stage and for film) alternative and more transparent explanations. For example; Noble's (1982) RSC production, in which Lear kills his Fool, and in Kosintsev's (1971) film the Fool does not disappear for good. In Peter Brook's 1971 dark, existential black and white film, we see the Fool and Lear wake up together and they behave as if they are experiencing a late morning phase of sleep before Lear draws the curtains of the carriage on him, the last image we have of his Fool. *Dream Yards* reimagines the Fool's role in the context of his last mysterious exit line: 'And I'll go to bed at noon.' It writes into the mystery of his disappearance and proposes that their relationship on the heath and in the storm is based upon the idea that it

is the Fool who guides Kong Lear to sleep. The storm sequence in Brook's film 'breaks single scenes into short episodes and redistributes them, and generally creates a structure of its own' (Legatt 2004:105). Here it seems as though Lear is experiencing hallucinations. 'Dreams are hallucinations that we all experience – hallucinations that have been regarded by many as a "normal" form of psychosis' (Solms and Turnbull 2002:181). We worked through the concept that the turbulent and violent storm is in fact Lear battling with his somnolence and vigilance mechanisms, wanting to sleep and fighting sleep, and eventually being pulled into a dream. We work through the concept that the storm scene is Lear sleeping proper.



We are now all in a transitional period between light sleep and very deep sleep; our brainwaves are slowing down, very sloooooowing down. Here come the planes.

### Sleep Stage 3

Solms explains Freud's theory that dreams are intended to fulfil wishes in order to protect sleep:

When the Ego goes to sleep, part of the mind that relates to the outside world goes to sleep. The Id, the part of the mind that relates to your endogenous, biological existence doesn't go to sleep, it can't go to sleep, you would die if it goes to sleep, this is necessary for keeping your vital, survival maintenance machinery going. (Solms 2013)

We are now heading into very deep sleep.

### Once more, Sleep Stage 2

Sleep has another direct effect on the imagination to which Shakespeare, like other poets, was keenly alive: it is the portrait and

prognostic of the sleep that ends all. Death itself. (Pyre 1916:56)

## REM

Thinking on the concept of Freud's sleep protection theory, where dreams are wishes, it is no coincidence that it has been argued that Lear wished his offspring



dead. Lear did not stray too far from such a threat as he shouts to Gloucester: 'Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me / Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum till it cry sleep to death' (Shakespeare 1997: 2. 4.245). In this context sleep is also a frightening foretaste of what happens if we don't wake up, or we miss something, or if we are attacked or worse beaten to death by our daughters, those unnatural hags?

We are all now experiencing bursts of rapid eye movement, we are paralyzed from the neck down and our breathing rate is shallow; lights, camera.

## Sleep Stage 2

Solms, after being interrupted by a telephone call, goes on to explain sleep mechanisms:

You know we are designed to live in a much more dangerous environment than Camden Town so you daren't switch off for 8 hours as you won't be able to wake up again! Sleep is a balancing act between somnolence mechanisms – things that are shutting you down – and arousal vigilance mechanisms – things that are waking you up; if you have a baby in the house you know that you are not asleep entirely, that you are tuned in to the baby. I think dreams play an important part in mediating between the wakefulness and the sleep mechanisms and the dream has an important part to play in deciding whether to let you wake up or whether to take you down one of these delusional, sideways safety valves. I am sure you have had these dreams of alarm bells or church bells ringing. (Solms 2013)

Our body temperature is dropping and our heart rate slows down. Can you feel it? We are now producing rapid, rhythmic brainwave activity and you begin to experience sleep spindles.

Kong Lear, now in sleep stage 2, performs as a TV host and interviews the Fool, who has shape shifted into a gorilla who only communicates through sign language.

*Kong Lear:* Thank you for coming! Are you comfortable? Are you happy? You are happy. You like conversation. You like to talk. What? It's your birthday? Oh, oh, it is your birthday! Happy birthday! (To

the audience) Wow! We got a birthday here! Though, we don't have a present for you! Ahh. Oh, but you want a present? You want a what? A cat? Oh a cat! What? A real cat! Ah, you want a real live cat for your birthday? What? You want to check my id? (Points at carved wooden head hanging on a chain around neck.) What, you would like to see my id? Oh, you want my id. (The Fool takes Kong Lear's id and sniffs it.) Yes, it's me, it's part me. Can you smell me? What do you like to do when you have time on your hands? You like to watch the movie *Tea With Mussolini*? Oh, good, why? It makes you sad? Oh you turn your back on the sad scene. What, when they are kissing him goodbye? Yes, it's a scene about courage. What, what did you say? You are what? Oh, you're

dead? You are dead. And you want a cat? Oh a real live cat. So, you are dead and you want a cat for your birthday? (To the audience) We've got a dead one here and it wants a cat for its birthday. (To the audience) Anyone have a cat? Tickle me? Tickle me!

(*Dream Yards* studio performance, 2014)

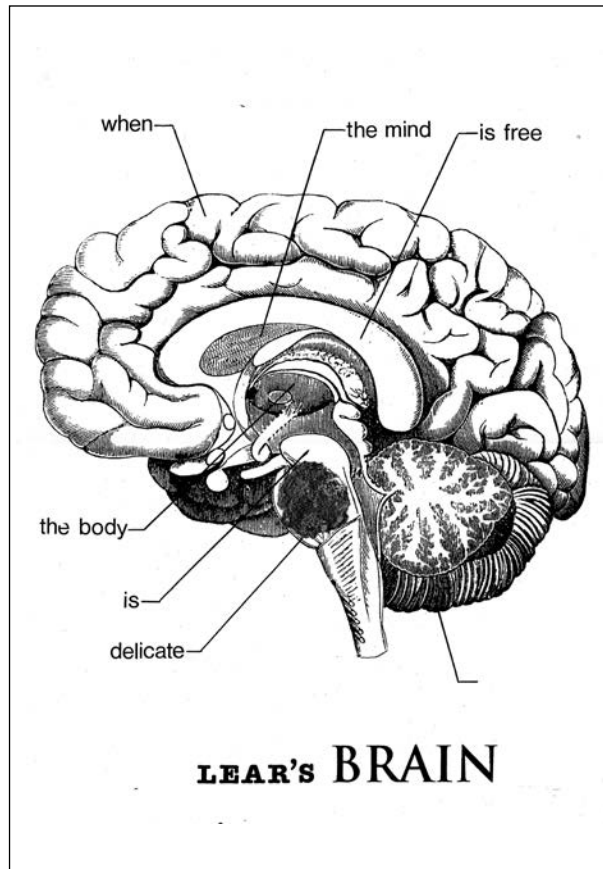
## REM

The camera pulls out to reveal an elderly man on a heath in 1970s Denmark. His image is distorted and the edits are quick and hallucinatory. We are paralyzed from the neck down and we are running and frightened but we are going nowhere.

## Oh, no, not again, Sleep Stage 2

We imagined the stages of sleep as a template to write into because they are an ideal form to write a non-linear repetitive composition. Solms discussed with us that dreaming takes place throughout all the stages of sleep and not just

in REM sleep, as once thought. To be more accurate he explained that there are three periods of sleep where you tend to dream more: the main one is REM sleep, the second and most common one is stage 1, sleep onset (which is non-REM), and the third one is when you are heading towards awaking whether you are in REM or not in REM and is called the late morning effect. Solms informed us that dreams are hallucinations and that 25 per cent of hallucinatory dreams happen in non-REM sleep. The fact that dreaming takes place throughout all the stages of sleep meant that we could imagine and write up specific narratives to coincide





with a full sleep cycle. Ideas that narrative threads could appear and disappear then reappear in different contexts to suit the dream states, for example; the late morning effect was developed in line with the Fool's disappearance at the end of the *Dream Yards* walking tour where Kong Lear has a realization that her Fool is not returning. In the studio show REM was delivered as an amalgamation of dream donations blended with a reimagined storm scene from King Lear and the late morning stage of the sleep cycle was played out as a rock concert finale extravaganza where Kong Lear, lying on a couch, is being counselled by her Fool, who has shape-shifted into the Abominable Sigmund Freud and who sings as she is coming out of sleep: 'Ooh I am Sigismund Schlomo Freud, I'm not easy to avoid, especially in the realm of dreams, and you keep asking What do they mean? But don't give up on dreams' (*Dream Yards* studio performance).

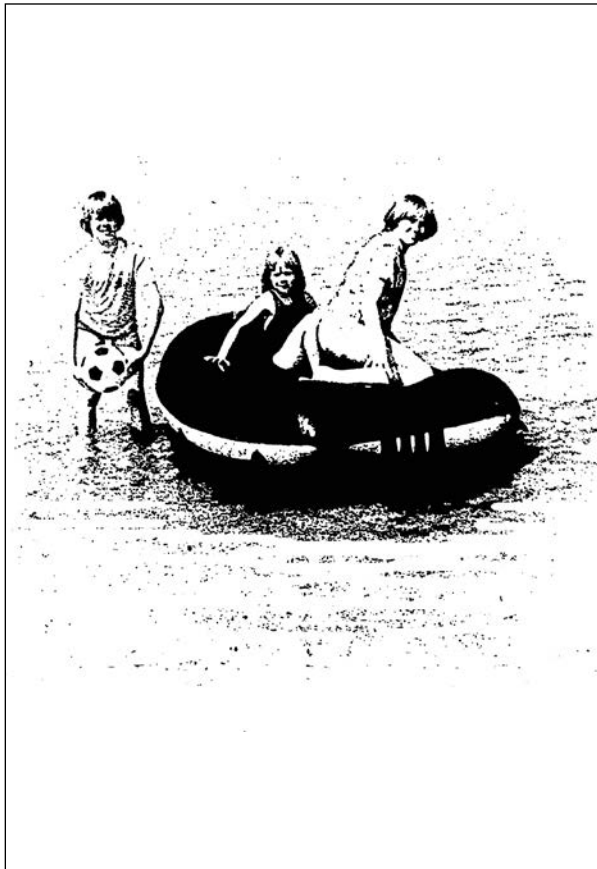
Our practice is also very much about finding a more intimate relationship with our audience because the community of dreamers (who were also audience members) contributed their hallucinations during the writing phase of both *Dream Yards* performances. We suggest, therefore, that the audience were practising dreaming with us. The idea that dreaming is a practice, like performance, comes from a conversation we had with Solms on how people describe their dreams. They describe them as if they really took place. Solms told us that hallucinatory dreams are self-involving and they can be detected by the way in which they are described; for instance, 'I was riding on a horse' was one example he gave of many. He pointed out that the dreamer doesn't say, 'I remember thinking about riding a horse'; rather she says, 'I was riding the horse' (Solms 2013). Descriptions of hallucinations suggest that the dreamer was there and that it was happening to them. This is not dissimilar to the subjunctive as-if experiences in our performances where the playfulness of other people's dreams is creativity embodied and where the audience are left thinking about their own dream and sleep patterns before, during and after they have witnessed the work.

Now, reader, your body temperature drops.

## REM

The camera pulls out to reveal two figures snuggled in close and waking from their sleep in a carriage set in Denmark, supposedly on its way to Dover.

Dreaming is akin to creating a pretend world where you delude yourself that you are acting on your impulses. Solms said one way to think of dreaming's relationship to sleep is to think of the



experience as virtual reality where 'you prance around and where you do exciting things. Dreaming is like a safety valve which enables you to stay asleep' (Solms 2013). Solms has added significant evidence to sleep science through neurological studies of his patients. He admits that his neurological work simply adds to what is already known but he notes that there is a hierarchy in terms of the evidence that people are willing to accept 'as soon as you show where in the brain something happens, they believe it' (Solms 2013). He informed us about a recent eight-year clinical study that he is leading on, working with patients who can't hallucinate the dream because they have damage to the perceptual structures of the brain. Solms' prediction from a study of patients with damage to the perceptual cortex (some of whom store dreams; some of whom don't store dreams) is that the ones who do store dreams should sleep fine and the ones that don't store dreams should wake up all the time.

If his prediction is not correct then it

means Freud's sleep protection theory (where we act from our desires in our sleep) is wrong. Solms' research is offering the opportunity to use Freud's theory scientifically and will form the basis of a study that he is due to publish. His study has found remarkable sleep maintenance insomnia in non-dreamers: they can't stay asleep and they can't dream so this has clinical implications because sleep is a fundamental to health. In testing Freud's sleep protection theory Solms is saying that dreams are more than a useless and frivolous function. So as it turns out dreams are very important indeed. So, don't give up on dreams, my friends.

Lear's phrase 'When the mind's free, The body's delicate' (Shakespeare 1992:3.4.272) is the biological dream processes writ large; it emphasizes the torment of peace, the fear of going to sleep. Our idea that Lear is hallucinating (dreaming) during the storm sequence therefore throws into question whether it is indeed the Doctor that gives Lear a good night's sleep after all. The Doctor gives him a sedative to aid his sleeping process, but speaking with Solms it would seem evident that this may have been more of a comatose experience for Lear rather than a proper hallucinatory experience and that this type of sleep would not have a curative purpose. The fact that Lear dies at the end of the play feeds into our narrative that the Fool is a guide into the fundamental stages of the sleep process and is the mediator between somnolence experiences and arousal vigilance mechanisms, but we also suggest, playfully and conceptually, that the Fool is Lear's id.

We are all now experiencing bursts of rapid eye movement, we are paralyzed from the neck down, and experiencing hyper brain activity.

#### Late Morning

Dear Claire and Gary, *Dream Yards* was meditative. Looking forward to sleeping later.

Hi Gary and Claire, I dreamt last night that I was buttering toast and my friend Tony walked in! I can't stop thinking that your tour sparked something off!

Dear Gary and Claire, it has been three weeks since the *Dream Yards* show in Leeds; I have had the most profound dreams ever and I haven't set my alarm!

Hiya Claire and Gary, the dreams you described reminded me of the ones I have; the ones where I am in a forest, shouting 'Help, I've been here before!'

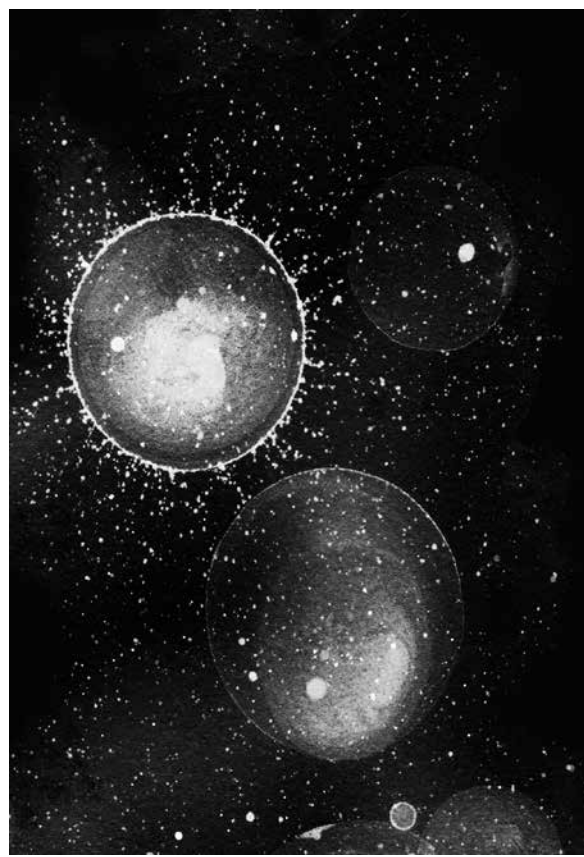
Hello Claire and Gary, I think about what I am going to dream about each night and look forward to going to sleep. I don't remember much of it, in fact I can't remember much at all, but weirdly I do know that I have dreamt; it's a strange and happy feeling.

Dear Gary and Claire, I have always said that I don't dream, and last night I dreamt that I was photocopying lots of paper; it went on for hours. I hope my next dream is more exciting.

Make no noise. It is late morning and you feel like you are coming out of something, something familiar. You lie completely still and remember that you were running for the thrill of it. Name it. HA!

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■ Details of main images: *Black Fill*; *Tornadoes Dream Sketch*; *An Elderly Man*; *Lear's Brain*; *Dinghy Dream Photo*; *Ink Bubble Pop*. Plus inserts of carved wooden heads used in *Dream Yards* studio performance. Credit: Gary Winters and Claire Hind.